

## AROUND TOWN

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## Meet the Artists: Jazz summit in Taipei

The musicians headlining this weekend's Taipei International Jazz Festival concerts represent the art form's stylistic and geographic diversity



John Beasley.

American pianist **John Beasley** ([www.beasleymusic.com](http://www.beasleymusic.com)) has recorded and toured with everyone from Miles Davis and Dianne Reeves to James Brown and Steely Dan. He is also known as a session player and composer for Hollywood films, including Pixar's *WALL-E* and *Finding Nemo*.



David Linx.

Belgian **David Linx** ([www.myspace.com/davidlinx](http://www.myspace.com/davidlinx)) is one to watch for jazz vocalist fans. He takes a freeform, creative approach to singing and has a diverse repertoire that ranges from classic standards to a scat monologue interpretation of Joni Mitchell's *Black Crow* that is worth checking out on his MySpace site.



Joachim Schoenecker.

Guitarist **Joachim Schoenecker** ([www.joachimschoenecker.com](http://www.joachimschoenecker.com)) plays hard bop among other modern jazz styles, and is a favorite among critics in his home country of Germany. Schoenecker was a past semifinalist in the prestigious Thelonious Monk International Jazz Competition.



John Allred.

Trombonist **John Allred** ([www.myspace.com/johnallredmusic](http://www.myspace.com/johnallredmusic)) has a background in traditional New Orleans jazz and spearheads the student parades today and tomorrow. The New York-based artist has played with Clark Terry, Wynton Marsalis

and Slide Hampton, and spent four years playing for Harry Connick Jr.'s band.



John Ruocco.

American **John Ruocco** ([www.jazzmasters.nl/johnruocco](http://www.jazzmasters.nl/johnruocco)) is a veteran clarinetist and saxophonist based in Europe, where he teaches and directs several big band orchestras.



Hsieh Chi-pin.

The Taipei International Jazz Festival features a number of jazz musicians active in Belgium: **Bert Joris** ([www.myspace.com/bertjoris](http://www.myspace.com/bertjoris)) is an award-winning trumpeter; drummer **Mimi Verderame** ([www.myspace.com/mimiverderame](http://www.myspace.com/mimiverderame)) is described

by festival founder **Hsieh Chi-pin** (謝啟彬) as a physically intense player; bassist **Bart De Nolf** ([www.myspace.com/bartdenolf](http://www.myspace.com/bartdenolf)) is a returning performer and instructor at TISJA. Also a festival regular, Dutch pianist **Peter Van Marle** specializes in Latin jazz and percussion.



Chang Kai-ya.

Also joining the performers are violinist **Hsieh Chi-pin** and pianist **Chang Kai-ya** (張凱雅) ([www.chipin-kaiya.com](http://www.chipin-kaiya.com)), instructors at Shih Chien University and co-founders of the Taipei International Jazz Festival and the Taipei International Summer Jazz Academy.

The sixth annual Taipei International Jazz Festival closes its seven-weekend run with concerts tonight and tomorrow at Da-an Forest Park (大安森林公園).

The festivities start this afternoon with parades performing Afro-Cuban and New Orleans traditional marching music, played by students from the festival's jazz learning camp. Percussion shakers will be passed out to any spectators that wish to join in.

The event culminates in concerts tonight and tomorrow, featuring nine guest artists from the US and Europe, as well as several Taiwanese musicians.

The performers, including American pianist John Beasley, Belgian vocalist David Linx and German guitarist Joachim Schoenecker, have spent the past week teaching at the Taipei International Summer Jazz Academy, the annual weeklong camp connected to the festival.

But the concerts won't just be lessons in jazz improv, they will be "more artistic than educational," says Hsieh Chi-pin (謝啟彬), a jazz violinist and one of the festival's founders and organizers.

Since it began in 2004, the festival, which was founded by Hsieh and his wife, pianist Chang Kai-ya

(張凱雅), has been tied to their interest in promoting jazz as music with substance.

"It's not about a beautiful girl or a sexy saxophonist standing on stage," says Hsieh.

To break down this misconception among local audiences, Hsieh and Chang set up a foundation for jazz with a unique Taiwanese flavor.

In camp sessions over the years, they have encouraged students to compose original songs inspired by their surroundings and adapt classic Taiwanese folk songs for jazz performance.

"We have a Western standard, but we also try to fuse it with material that people are familiar with," says Hsieh.

One former student, bassist Jeremy Lin (林后進), composed a song about Zhongxiao Fuxing MRT Station (忠孝復興捷運站), which Hsieh says received a strong response from the audience at a festival show earlier this month. The Anne Paceo Trio, which performed several weeks ago, also pleased its audience with a rendition of a well-known Taiwanese folk number.

The festival has also watched its audiences mature. In earlier editions, emcees had to coach attendees on basic etiquette such as clapping after solos. This is no

longer necessary, says Hsieh, adding there has been "less talk" on stage at this year's festival.

Better yet, audiences nowadays seem more genuinely interested in hearing a "fine jazz music program," he says.

Despite the art form's American roots, Hsieh and Chang have tried to stress jazz's current diversity.

While most of this year's performers were from the US and Europe, Hsieh says he is glad to have included in this year's program the a.s.k Trio, which played last week and is composed of a South African, a Japanese and a Dutchman.

"Jazz has an identity in every country," says Hsieh. "Jazz isn't just American standards, like Broadway [songs]... anything can be jazz and many people can play jazz."

## Festival notes:

**What:** Final concerts of the Taipei International Jazz Festival  
**When:** Tonight and Tomorrow at 7pm, afternoon jazz parades run today and tomorrow from 4:30pm to 6:30pm

**Where:** Da-an Forest Park (大安森林公園)

**On the Net:** [blog.yam.com/tijs2009en/article/21438676](http://blog.yam.com/tijs2009en/article/21438676);  
[www.taipeijazz.com](http://www.taipeijazz.com)

Belgian trumpeter Bert Joris performs tonight and tomorrow with other jazz artists from the US, Europe and Taiwan.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE TAIPEI INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

## More jazz, less talk

*Now in its sixth year, the Taipei International Jazz Festival wraps up its annual summer run of outdoor concerts with a weekend finale that starts tonight at Da-an Forest Park*

BY DAVID CHEN  
STAFF REPORTER

